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LETTER

From the REVEREND

Mr. George Whitefield

To the RELIGIOUS

SOCIETIES of *England*.

Written in his Voyage to *Philadelphia* 1739, and
now particularly recommended to those who
have lately formed themselves into RELIGIOUS

SOCIETIES in *Scotland*.

To which is added,

An EXTRACT from a late Author, shewing
that a CATHOLICK SPIRIT is the only Thing
that can unite and make Christians happy one
amongst another in this divided State of Things.

EDINBURGH,

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Preface to the Reader.

THE following Letter was written in the Year 1739, in my Voyage to Philadelphia, and was printed afterwards at London in a quite different Dress than that in which I sent it over: I thought proper therefore to let the World see it as it came out of my Hands, excepting a few Alterations that have been made in it, I trust for the better. I hope it will be particularly seasonable at this Time.— For, as there has been lately an Awakening in Scotland, so I suppose Persons will of themselves naturally join together, and form little Societies.— For such this fresh Edition of the ensuing Tract is particularly designed.— And that God may give it his Blessing, is the hearty Prayer of their Souls Well-wisher and Servant in the Gospel of Jesus Christ,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.

May the 25th 1742.
On board the *Mary*
and *Ann*, Captain *Angus* Commander, bound
from London to Leith.

Postscript to the Reader.

Edinburgh, June 4th 1742.

IN my Passage to this Place I met with a Book lately published, out of which I have taken the following Extract.— Methinks there is something in it so truly noble, and so very necessary to be learn'd at this Time, and so exactly expressing the Language of my own Heart, that I thought proper to annex it to this Letter.— May the compassionate Lover of Souls fill every Reader with that universal Love that is recommended therein.— Well then will it be with them, and happy will they be.

I am,

Thy Soul's Well-wisher,

and hearty Servant,

in Jesus Christ,

GEORGE WHITEFIELD.



My dear Brethren in Christ,

THE Apostle in his Epistle to the *Hebrews*, Chap. x. 23. exhorts them to hold fast the Profession of their Faith without wavering ; and soon after adds, as a most effectual Means to so desirable an End, *Let us consider one another to provoke unto Love, and to good Works ; not forsaking the assembling of ourselves together.*

As Christianity was not then the National Religion, I suppose the Assemblies here intended were not such as our publick Congregations, but rather little private Societies, or Associations, or Churches, as was the Custom of the primitive Christians, who, we are told, continued stedfastly in the Apostle's Doctrine, and in Fellowship one with another.

This was the Apostle's Exhortation to the Christians of those Times ; and I am fully perswaded there never was more Occasion for renewing it than in the Age wherein we live.

For nothing hath of late more alarmed the Enemies of the Cross of Christ than the Zeal that God hath stirred up in the Hearts of many to put in Practice this Apostolical Injunction. Balls, Plays, Horse-Races, and such like unchristian and fatal Entertainments, are countenanced and supported by publick Authority. Few (publickly at least) have as yet had Courage to speak, preach, or write for the suppressing them so plainly and publickly as they ought ; But, if the Children of God

meet

meet (as they are required) to build up each other in their most holy Faith, almost every one's Mouth is opened against them. Nay, with Grief it must be spoken, even many of our Masters in *Israel*, who ought to be Patterns, and promote every good Word and Work, are not content with countenancing the polite, that is, sinful Diversions of the Age by their Presence and Appobation, but are generally most bitter in their Invectives against religious Societies. The former, tho' directly contrary to our Baptismal Vow, are deemed innocent, if not useful, by them. The latter they are continually crying down (especially if any Life or Divine Power be amongst them) as schismatical, seditious, and tending to destroy the present established Constitution.

For these, and many such like Reasons, as present with you in Spirit, tho' absent in Body, I thought it my Duty to put you in mind zealously to perfist in your Obedience to the fore-mentioned Injunction once delivered to the Saints; and so much the more, as in all Probability the Day of Persecution nearer and nearer approaches.

God has given an Harvest, and there has been a Gathering in.—A winnowing Time will come.—His Fan is already in his Hand:— Yet a little while, and (if the Work lately begun be carried on) I am perswaded he will throughly purge his Floor.—The Shepherds must first be smitten; next Endeavours will be exerted to scatter the Sheep.—The religious Societies *Satan* has undoubtedly desired to have, that he may sift them as Wheat.—My Brethren, watch and pray one for another, that you may be enabled to stand in such an Hour of Temptation, and having done all to stand.

Be not ashamed of that wherein you ought to glory.—Religious Society is of Divine Extraction. As God first made Man, so God first said, *It is not good that Man should be alone, I will make a Help meet for him.* Meet, as I take it, not merely for his Body (Man had few corporal Wants in Paradise) but chiefly and primarily for his better Part the Soul, *viz.* that he might have one to converse with of his own Species, Bone of his Bone, and Flesh of his Flesh.

'Tis true, Man is now a fallen, but yet he is a social Creature: And as the End of his coming into this World was to prepare for a better; so without doubt the chief End of Society in general, and of religious Society in particular, is that we may be Helps meet for each other in the great Work of our Salvation.

Upon this Account it was that the first Christians so frequently assembled themselves together, when obliged to shut the Doors for fear of the Jews.—And their continuing in Fellowship with each other, was one main Reason why they continued stedfast in the Apostles Doctrine.

Take then, my Brethren, the primitive Christians for your Examples:—Their Practices are recorded for our learning.—No Power on Earth can lawfully forbid or hinder your imitating them.—In all such Cases we must obey God rather than Man; otherwise we so far deny our holy Profession, and are Enemies to the Cross of Christ: And tho', because you have got a little out of the formal Way, some blind Zealots may brand you as schismatical; yet if you fear God, and truly honour the King, and are of the Number of those who are quiet in the Land, there is no Reason can be

be urged against your Societies, which will not equally hold good against all assembling together for religious Purposes.

In this Respect, a private Prelate has no more Authority than a private Presbyter.—If it be lawful for more than Five to meet in a private Vestry, it is equally lawful for more than Five to meet in a private House ; as is the Practice of some of the Societies who are under the Government of those *called* the Twelve Stewards.—If it be enquired of you by what Authority you use sometimes to pray without a premeditated Form of Words ; you may enquire, “By what Authority any one reads the “ Church-forms who is not commissioned so to do, “ and that in any Place but in the Church,” where only they are appointed to be read, and only by one so commissioned ? If they reply, “We have “ Doctor Woodward’s Form ;” You may answer them with this Question, “What Difference is there, “ in respect to others, between a Person’s reading “ a Form which few that hear it know before-“ hand, and a Person’s praying *extempore*, as the “ Holy Spirit gives him Utterance ?” If they laugh at all Mention of praying by the Spirit, Brethren, I hope you know better. Stand fast therefore in the Liberty wherewith Christ has made you free ; and be not afraid by such a Practice to make Innovations into the Church, That does not confine its Members to Forms, but within the Church-Walls, nor even there altogether.—In private Assemblies, such as yours, all are left to their Liberty ; and therefore, as many as would hinder you in this, at once discover their pitiable Ignorance of that Constitution they pretend to promote,

and

and an unhappy Estrangement from the Spirit and Privileges of the Gospel.

How to improve your Meetings so as best to promote God's Glory, and the Good of your own Souls, ought to be your constant and chief Concern: For as Christians in general, so Members of religious Societies in particular, are as Cities built upon a Hill; and therefore it more highly concerns them to let their Light so shine before Men, that they seeing their good Works, may glorify our Father which is in Heaven.

Not that a Communion of perfect Saints is to be expected here on Earth:—Or that you ought to be immediately offended, if some of your Brethren should be overtaken with a Fault.—In this World Tares will be always springing up amongst the Wheat.—Many that are first will be last, and the last first.—Nay, it is well if some do not like *Judas* at length lay aside their Profession, and openly betray our Master.

To prevent this, you ought to be very cautious, my Brethren, whom you admit into Fellowship with you.—Examine them again and again, not barely whether they receive the Sacrament, and go to Church; but whether they be in the Faith. Set them upon proving their own selves; and by no means receive them into your Brotherhood, unless they can produce sufficient Evidences of their having tasted the good Word of Life, and felt the Powers of the World to come.—This, some may object, is not a very good Way to increase and multiply you as to Number; but it is the best, the only Way, to establish and increase a Communion of true Saints.—And such a Society, consisting of a few solid Christians, is far preferable to one that

is filled with a Multitude of such as do not bring forth Fruit unto Holiness, but have only the Fig-leaves of an outward Profession. Formal Hypocrites will do any Society more Harm than Good : And however they may endure for a while, and receive the Word with Joy ; yet, having no Root in themselves, in Time of Temptation they will shamefully fall away.

Next, To your Care about admitting others, I think it highly concerns you, whenever you assemble, to remember the End of meeting yourselves ; and then (to use the Words of the wise Son of *Sirach* on another Occasion) you will never do amiss.—Now, the End of your meeting, Brethren, is not that you may think yourselves more holy than your Neighbours, much less to form a Sect or Party, or promote a Schism or Sedition in the Church or State. No ; such Thoughts, I trust, are far from you :— For they are earthly, sensual, devilish.—And, if ever such Designs should be set on Foot, I earnestly pray God the Abettors of them may be detected, and all their Schemes, tho' never so plausibly concerted, fall to the Ground.— The only End, I hope, you all propose by your assembling yourselves together, is the same for which you were redeemed, *viz.* the renewing of your depraved Natures, and promoting the hidden Life of Jesus Christ in your Souls.—These Terms, however Foolishness to others, I trust, my Brethren, are not so to you.—I take it for granted you are not only desirous of, but already in some Measure blessed with, a saving experimental Knowledge of Jesus Christ in your Hearts :—For unless a Man be born again from above, and made a Partaker of the Divine Nature by the Indwelling of God's

God's Holy Spirit, he can in nowise enter into the Kingdom of Heaven.—Whoever denies this to be true in the most literal, real and absolute Sense of the Words, knows nothing yet as he ought to know:—For it is grounded on a self-evident Truth, that we are fallen from God in *Adam*, and must be renewed in the Spirit of our Minds, ere we can be restored to that blissful Communion with him, which is the free Gift of God and eternal Life.—

The only Way to this is Faith in Jesus Christ; Faith in Contradistinction to, tho' necessarily productive of, good Works.—*I am the Way, the Truth, and the Life:—Whosoever believeth on me, tho' he were dead, yet shall he live*, says Christ himself.—And I think it my bounden Duty to exhort you at this Time, to contend earnestly for the Doctrine of Justification by Faith only, because so many blind Guides are lately gone out into the World.—My Brethren, it is much to be feared that many of our present Preachers are no better than doctrinal Papists.—And however this, to those *who having Eyes see not*, may be judged an uncharitable Censure; yet surely they cannot justly blame me for Want of Candour, who consider that one who has been reputed to be the most orthodox Prelate in the Kingdom, in a late Pastoral Letter advises his Clergy, “so to explain the Doctrine of Justification “in the Sight of God by Faith only, as to make “good Works a necessary Condition.” Such Advice from a *Roman* Cardinal would be no more than we might expect; but, coming from a Bishop of the Church of *England*, is surprising, and much to be lamented.

God forbid, my Brethren, that you should so learn Christ. If the Scriptures are true, such a Doctrine is absolutely false.— The lively Oracles nowhere declare good Works to be a necessary Condition of our Justification in the Sight of God; On the contrary, they everywhere affirm, that Salvation is the free *Gift of God, through Jesus Christ our Lord* :— That we are saved by Grace through Faith; and that it is not of Works, *lest any Man should boast*. No, my Brethren, in the great Mystery of Man's Redemption by Jesus Christ, Boasting is entirely excluded.

We must not expect to be saved, or any way recommend ourselves to God, by any or all the Works of Righteousness which we have done, or shall, or can do.— The Lord Christ is *our Righteousness*,—our whole Righteousness:— It is to be imputed to us, instead of our own.— *We are compleat in him*, says the Scripture.— We are accounted righteous before God, only for the Merits of our Lord Jesus Christ, by Faith, saith the eleventh Article of our Church. And, if so, how are good Works, my Brethren, a necessary Condition of our Justification in the Sight of God? The Law indeed says, *Do this, and live*:— But the Gospel brings us the glad Tidings, that *Christ is the End of the Law for Righteousness to every one that believeth*.— Christ by his Sacrifice, and perfect Obedience, has every way fulfilled the Law for us; and God will not require to be paid twice.— Christ bought our Justification with a great Price, even his own Blood.— It comes to us freely, without any Regard to Works past, present, or to come.— This is the constant Language of Christ and his Apostles; And therefore, to use the Words of the foremention'd

Article, " That we are justified by Faith only, is " a most wholesome Doctrine, and very full of " Comfort." Observe, my Brethren, justified *by* or *through* Faith, and not *for* Faith ;— for Faith is only a Means or Instrument whereby the whole Righteousness of Jesus Christ is applied to the Sinner's Soul :— And whosoever does thus believe in his Heart, setting to his Seal that God is true, may then be assured that his Pardon is sealed in Heaven ; and that notwithstanding he has lived in an open Breach of God's Commandments all his Lifetime before.— *Believe*, says the Apostle to the trembling Taylor, *and thou shalt be saved* :— *For whosoever believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God*.— So that this Faith will not be dead, idle or inactive :— For 'tis not a Faith of the Head, or a bare Assent to Things credible as credible ;— the Devils thus believe and tremble :— But it is a Faith of the Heart,— a living Principle of new Life, infused into the Soul by the Spirit of God, applying that inwardly, which was wrought for him outwardly by the Obedience and Death of Jesus Christ, and continually exciting the Possessor of it to shew it forth by his Works ; not as necessary Conditions, but as Proofs, of his Justification in God's Sight ; and as so many Tokens of his Gratitude and Love for what God has done for his Soul.— This is what the Apostle styles a *Faith working by Love*.

I cannot conclude this better than in the Words of a truly Evangelical Writer now before me.— " The Law (sayst thou) must be obeyed." I answer, " Christ Jesus hath done that in his own " Person, and justified me thereby ; and, for my " own Part, I will not labour now to fulfil the Law
" for

“ for Justification, lest I should undervalue the
 “ Merits of the Man Christ Jesus, and what he hath
 “ done without me ; and yet will I labour to ful-
 “ fil, if possible, Ten thousand Laws if there were
 “ so many : And oh let it be out of Love to my
 “ sweet Lord Jesus—For the Love of Christ con-
 “ strains me.”

You see, my Brethren, this is a Topic which I love to dwell upon.—A divine Fire kindles in my Heart, whilst I am musing on it, and writing to you about it :—And I should here enlarge, but I must hasten to recommend to you another Thing of unspeakable Importance to the Well-being of Christian Society, *viz.* a Spirit of universal Love.—Let not Bigotry or Party-zeal be so much as once named amongst you ;—For it becometh not Saints. Our Lord was a Stranger to it.—Whosoever did the Will of his Father, the same was his Brother, his Sister, his Mother.—Wherever he saw the Marks of true Faith, tho' in a *Centurion* or a *Syrophe-nician*, who were Aliens to the Commonwealth of *Israel* and Strangers to the Covenant of Promise, how did he publish and commend it ? *Be Followers then of him*, my Brethren, *as dear Children* ; and love all who love our Lord Jesus in Sincerity and Truth, altho' they should not in all Things follow with us.—*Pharisees* and *Sadducees*, the Self-righteous and Free-thinkers of this Generation, all the Children of the Devil, whether rich or poor, high or low, however they may differ in other Respects, yet agree in this one Thing, *viz.* to conspire against the Lord and against his Christ.—Why should not the Children of God, notwithstanding their little Differences, unite in one common Interest against spiritual Wickednesses in high Places ? Oh that all that

that call themselves Christians were thus minded ! How should we see the Kingdom of Christ *come with Power*, and *Satan like Lightning fall from Heaven* !— From the Beginning it hath been his Policy to divide Christians into Sects and Parties, hoping thereby not only to weaken their Interest, but to make them thereby believe that Religion wholly consists in being of this or that particular Communion :— And this Subtilty of that old Serpent hath so prevailed, that tho' we all profess to hold one Lord, one Faith, one Baptism ; yet Numbers look upon those that differ from them, and that only in Externals, almost as Creatures of another Species, and forbid us with such even to eat.— This was once the State of the *Jewish*, as it is now of the Christian Church—but God shew'd his Dislike of such a Temper, by convincing *Peter* in a miraculous Manner, that he was henceforward to call nothing common or unclean, but freely to converse with all who feared him and worked Righteousness, for that all such were accepted of him.— My Brethren, be not you disobedient to this heavenly Vision :— For our Sakes no doubt it was written, and for as many as the Lord our God shall call.— The Self-righteous, and perhaps some who are weak in Faith, will censure and condemn your Conduct (as the Brethren did *Peter*) when they espy your free Conversation in Christ :— But *Peter* has furnished you with an Answer ; *Forasmuch as God hath given to them the like Gift as to us, who believed on Jesus, what are we, that we should withstand God* ? How dare we make a Difference, when God has made none ? How dare we not freely converse with those who have received the Holy Ghost as well as we ?

Further,

Further, my Brethren, content not yourselves with Reading, Singing and Praying together ; but set some Time apart to confess your Faults and communicate your Experiences one to another.— For Want of this (which I take to be one chief Design of private Meetings) most of the old Societies in London, I fear, are sunk into a dead Formality, and have only a Name to live.— They meet on a Sabbath Evening, read a Chapter, and sing a Psalm; but seldom, if ever, acquaint each other with the Operations of God's Spirit upon their Souls, notwithstanding this was the great End and Intention of those who first began these Societies.— Hence it is that they have only the *Form of Godliness* left amongst them, and continue utter Strangers to the State of one another's Hearts.— How Love or the Power of Religion can subsist in such a lukewarm and superficial Way of proceeding, is very hard to conceive.— My Brethren, let not your coming together be thus altogether in vain, but plainly and freely tell one another what God has done for your Souls.— To this End, you would do well, as others have done, to form yourselves into little Companies ~~of~~ Four or Five each, and meet once a Week to tell each other what is in your Hearts ; that you then also pray for and comfort each other as Need shall require.— None but those that have had Experience can tell the unspeakable Advantages of such a Union and Communion of Souls.— By this Means, brotherly Love will be excited and increased amongst you, and you will learn to watch over one another for good.— This will teach you the better how to pray and give Thanks for each other in your private Retirement, and happily prevent and deliver you from many Snares of the Devil :— For Satan loves that

we should keep his Temptations to ourselves, but cares not so much to meddle with those who he knows will discover his Devices to their Brethren. Besides, this is a most effectual Means for each to try the Sincerity of his own Heart, as well as another's.— No one, I think, that truly loves his own Soul, and his Brethren as himself, will be shy of opening his Heart, in order to have their Advice, Reproof, Admonition, and Prayers, as Occasions require.— A sincere Person will esteem it one of the greatest Blessings ;— Nor do I know a better Means in the World to keep Hypocrify out from amongst you.— *Pharisees and Unbelievers will pray, read, and sing Psalms ; but none save an Israelite indeed will endure to have his Heart searched out.* *He that hath Ears to bear, let him bear.*

Finally, my Brethren, expect a large Share of Contempt ;— For Christ's Servants were always the World's Fools. — *As for this Sect or Heresy, said the Jews to Paul, we know it is everywhere spoken against.* — And again, *Paul had Authority from the chief Priests, to bring as many as he found of this Way.* Thus were the Disciples of the Lord treated in the Infancy of the Church ;— And as it was formerly, so it is and will be now. — In our Days, to be a true Christian, is really to become scandalous.— If you were of the World, the World would love its own ; but if you are not of the World, but Christ has chosen you out of the World, for this very Cause the World most assuredly will hate you. — However it may seem strange to the natural Man, yet there never was a true Saint, who was not, like his Saviour, accounted beside himself.— And they that will live godly in Christ Jesus

Ius must to the End of Time suffer Persecution for his Name's Sake.

But, God forbid, my Brethren, that a little, nay, that all the Contempt in the World, should anywise move you away from the stedfast Profession of the Hope of the Gospel.---Our Lord was despised before us; --- And you know the Servant must not presume to be above his Master. No; it is sufficient if he be as his Master, *made perfect through Sufferings.*---Be stedfast therefore, my Brethren, *quit yourselves like Men, be strong;* yea, *be strong in the Lord, and in the Power of his Might.*---Be not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, but follow your Master without the Camp, bearing his sacred Reproach.---When you are reviled, revile not again.---Bless, my Brethren, and curse not.---Be subject to the higher Power in all lawful Things, and beware of all who would turn Religion into Faction.---Remember again and again, that the Weapons of our Warfare are not carnal; and that it is our Glory, when called to it, patiently to suffer for the Truth's Sake.---

Thus, my Brethren, out of the Fulness of my Heart have I wrote unto you.---Many of you I never yet saw, and perhaps never may see in the Flesh; --- However I love you in the Bowels of Jesus Christ, and heartily beseech God to bless what I trust his Spirit has now enabled me to write unto you.---

You see, my Brethren, I have confined myself to such Particulars as relate to the improving your Societies, and making them truly Christian.---I hope you will in like manner take heed to your Ways in common Life, and never give the Adversary Room justly to speak reproachfully of your

Con-

Conduct.— My Brethren, the Eyes of all Men are upon you.— Indeed it highly concerns you to walk exceeding circumspectly towards those that are without.— I am sure you will not be offended, if, out of Love, I remind you to perform all relative Duties with the utmost Cheerfulness, and a single Eye to the Glory of God.— Let your Obedience be constant, universal and uniform, founded on a living Faith in Christ Jesus, that by Well-doing you may put to Silence the Slanders of foolish and evil Men.— Let your Speech, and all your Actions, betray whose Disciples you are.— Confess your Lord publickly before Men, and be not afraid to tell those that have Ears to hear, what God hath done for your Souls.— It is good to keep cloſs the Secrets of a King, but it is honourable to reveal the Works of the Almighty.— Above all Things, my Brethren, have fervent Charity among yourselves.— Bear ye one another's Burdens, and so fulfil the Law of Christ.— Be pitiful, be courteous, be tender-hearted ; and let it be said of you as of the primitive Saints, *See how these Christians LOVE one another.*— Fulfil all Righteousness, by constantly attending on every Ordinance of God.— You may use, yet not abuse, the Means of Grace, by resting in them ; knowing that the Kingdom of God is not Meats and Drinks, but Righteousness, Peace and Joy in the Holy Ghost.— Think that Day lost wherein you do not make an Advance in some of these.— The Work of Regeneration, tho' instantaneous at first, is progressive afterwards.— The Seed sown in the Heart must be continually watered, otherwise it will not grow into a great Tree.— I pray God therefore to sanctify you throughout, in Spirit,

Soul and Body, and preserve you blameless till the Coming of our Lord Jesus Christ with all his Saints.—Then all Tears shall be wiped away from your Eyes, and we shall spend an endless Eternity in singing Praises to him that sitteth upon the Throne, even unto the Lamb for ever and ever.—
Now, unto him that is able to keep you from falling, and to preserve you faultless before the Presence of his Glory with exceeding Joy, to the only wise God our Saviour, be Glory and Majesty, Dominion and Power, both now and ever. Amen!



Fol-

Follows the EXTRACT.

BUT the Doctor has a second *Reply* to this Matter, which stands thus expressed. *Whether, says he, you consider the Divinity, or the Sense of this, could George Fox himself have out-done it?* p. 48. This Reply, consider'd in itself, might have its Place amongst those *Algebraic Quantities*, that are some Degrees less than nothing ; but with regard to the Doctor's Purpose it has *something* in it, for it is an Appeal to *that* which is very powerful, which has suppress'd many a good Truth ; it is an Appeal to *vulgar Prejudice*, and shews that the Doctor is not without his Expectations from that Quarter. And thus it is, that the *Catholick Artist*, in his Country plays a *Martin Luther*, when he wants to reproach *that* which he knows not how to confute. What Degree of Sense, or Divinity *George Fox* was posseſſed of, I cannot pretend to say, having never read any of his Writings ; but, if he has said any good and divine Truths, I should be as well pleased in seeing them in his Books, as in any of the *Fathers* of the primitive Church. For as the Gospel requires me to be glad to see *Piety, Equity, strict Sobriety, and extensive Charity* in a *Jew* or a *Gentile*, as in a Christian ; as it obliges me to look with Pleasure upon their Virtues, and be thankful to God, that such Persons have *so much of* ~~that is valuable~~ *any* ^{the} ~~and found Christianity~~ in them ; so it cannot be an unchristian Spirit to be as glad to see Truths in one Party of Christians as in another ; and to look with Pleasure upon any good Doctrines that are held by any

any Sect of Christian People, and be thankful to God, that they have so much of the genuine, saving Truths of the Gospel amongst them. For if we have no Anger or Complaint against those that are divided from us, but what proceeds from a Christian Fear that what they *hold* and *practise* will not be so *beneficial* to them, as our Religion will be to us, must we not have the utmost *Readiness* and *Willingness* to find, own, and rejoice in those good Doctrines and Practices which they still retain and profess ? If a poor *Pilgrim*, under a Necessity of travelling a dangerous and difficult Road by himself, had, through his own *Perverseness*, lost the Use of a *Leg*, and the Sight of *one Eye*, could we be said to have any *charitable Concern* for his *Perverseness* and *Misfortune*, unless we were glad to see that he had one good *Leg*, and one good *Eye* still left, and unless we hop'd and desir'd they might bring him at last to his Journey's End ? Now, let every Part of the Church which takes itself to be *sound* and *good*, and is only angry at every other Part, because they have *lessen'd the Means* of their own *Salvation* ; let her but have thus much *Charity* in her *Anger*, and then she will be glad to see, in every *perverse Division*, something like the one *good Leg*, and the one *good Eye* of the *Pilgrim*, and which she will hope and wish may do them the same *Good*.

Selfishness and *Partiality* are very inhumane and base Qualities, even in the Things of this World ; but in the Doctrines of Religion they are of a baser Nature. Now, this is the *greatest Evil* that the Division of the Church has brought forth ; it raises in every Communion a *selfish*, *partial Orthodoxy*, which consists in courageously defending all that

that it has, and condemning all that it has not. And thus every Champion is train'd up in Defence of their *own Truth*, their *own Learning*, and their *own Church*; and he has the most Merit, the most Honour, who likes every Thing, defends every Thing amongst themselves, and leaves nothing unenclosed in those that are of a different Communion. Now, how can Truth, and Goodness, and Union, and Religion be more *struck at*, than by such Defenders of it? If you ask why the great Bishop of *Meux* wrote so many learned Books against all Parts of the *Reformation*, it is because he was born in *France*, and bred up in the Bosom of *Mother Church*. Had he been born in *England*, had *Oxford* or *Cambridge* been his *Alma Mater*, he might have rival'd our great Bishop *Stillingfleet*, and would have wrote as many learned *Folio's* against the Church of *Rome* as he has done. And yet I will venture to say, that if each Church could produce but one Man a-piece that had the *Piety* of an Apostle, and the *impartial Love* of the firſt Christians, in the firſt Church at *Jerusalem*, that a Protestant and a *Papist* of this Stamp would not want *half a Sheet* of Paper to hold their Articles of Union, nor be half an Hour before they were of one Religion.

If we lov'd Truth as ſuch; if we ſought it for its own Sake; if we lov'd our Neighbour as ourſelves; if we desir'd nothing by our Religion but to be acceptable to God; if we equally desir'd the Salvation of all Men; if we were afraid of Error only because of its hurtful Nature to us, and our Fellow-Churches; then nothing of this Spirit could have any Place in us.

There is therefore a *Catholick Spirit*, a *Communi-
on*

on of Saints in the Love of God and all Goodness, which no one can learn from that which is called *Orthodoxy* in particular Churches, but is only to be had by a *total Dying* to all worldly Views, by a *pure Love* of God, and by such an *Uncion* from above, as delivers the Mind from all *Selfishness*, and makes it love Truth and Goodness with an Equality of Affection in every Man, whether he be *Christian*, *Jew*, or *Gentile*. He that would obtain this Divine and Catholick Spirit in this disordered, divided State of Things, and live in a divided Part of the Church without partaking of its Division, must have these *three Truths* deeply fixed in his Mind: *First*, That univerſal Love, which gives the whole Strength of the Heart to God, and make us love every Man as we love ourselves, is the Nobleſt, the most Divine, and God-like State of the Soul, and is the utmost Perfection to which the most perfect Religion can raife us; and that no Religion does any Man any Good, but so far as it brings this Perfection of Love into him. This Truth will ſhew us, that *true Orthodoxy* can nowhere be found, but in a pure disinterested Love of God and our Neighbour. *Secondly*, That, in the *present divided* State of the Church, Truth itſelf is torn and *divided asunder*; and that therefore he can be the only *true Catholick*, who has more of Truth, and less of Error, than is hedged in by any divided Part. This Truth will enable us to live in a divided Part, *unhurt* by its Division, and keep us in a true Liberty and Fitness to be edify'd and affiſted by all the Good that we hear or ſee in any other Part of the Church. And thus uniting in Heart and Spirit with all that is *holy* and *good* in all Churches, we enter into the *true Communion of Saints*, and become real Members

Members of the holy Catholick Church, tho' we are confined to the outward Worship of only one particular Part of it. It is thus, that the Angels, as ministring Spirits, assist, join, unite, and co-operate with every Thing that is holy and good, in every Division of Mankind. *Thirdly*, He must always have in Mind this great Truth, That it is the Glory of the Divine Justice to have no Respect of *Parties* or *Persons*, but to stand equally disposed to that which is right and wrong, as well in the *Jew* as in the *Gentile*. He therefore that would like as God likes, and condemn as God condemns, must have neither the *Eyes* of the *Papist* nor the *Protestant*; he must like no Truth the less, because *Ignatius Loyola*, or *John Bunyan* were very zealous for it; nor have the less Aversion to any Error, because Dr. *Trap* or *George Fox* had brought it forth. Now if this univerial Love, and impartial Justice, is the Spirit which will judge the World at the last Day, how can this Spirit be *too soon* or *too much* in us? Or what can do us more Hurt than that which is an *Hindrance* of it? When I was a young Scholar of the *University*, I heard a great *Religionist* say in my *Father's House*, that, if he could believe the late *King of France* to be in Heaven, he could not tell how to wish to go thither himself. This was exceeding shocking to all that heard it: Yet *something* of this kind of Temper must be supposed to be more or less in those, who have, as a Point of *Orthodoxy*, work'd themselves up into a hearty *Contempt* and *Hatred* of those that are divided from them. He that has been all his Life long used to look with great Abhorrence upon those whom he has called *superstitious Bigots*, *dreaming Visionaries*, *false Saints*, *canting Enthusiasts*,

fasts, &c. must naturally expect they will be treated by God as they have been by him ; and, if he had the *Keys* of the Kingdom of Heaven, such People would find it hard to get a Place in it. But it stands us greatly in Hand to get rid of this Temper before we die ; for, if nothing but *universal Love* can enter into the Kingdom of God, what can be more necessary for us, than to be full of this Love before we die ?

We often hear of People of great *Zeal* and *Orthodoxy*, declaring on their *Death-beds* their strict Attachment to the Church of *England*, and making *solemn Protestations* against all other Churches ; but how much better would it be, if such a Person was to say, " In this *divided State* of Christendom, I must conform to some outwardly divided Part of it, and therefore I have chosen to live and die in outward Communion with the Church of *England* ; fully believing, that, if I worship God in *Spirit and in Truth* in this divided Part of the Church, I shall be as acceptable to him, as if I had been a faithful Member of the one whole Church, before it was broken into separate Parts. But as I am now going out of this disordered Division, into a more *universal State* of Things ; as I am now falling into the Hands of the great Creator and Lover of *all Souls* ; as I am going to the God of *all Churches*, to a Kingdom of *universal Love*, which must have its Inhabitants from *all People, Nations, and Languages* of the Earth ; so, in this Spirit of universal Love, I desire to perform my last Act of Communion in this divided Church, uniting and joining in Heart and Spirit with all that is *Christian, Holy, Good, and Acceptable to God*, in all other

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" other Churches; praying, from the Bottom of
" my Soul, that every Church may have *its Saints* ;
" that God's Kingdom may come, his Will be done
" in every Division of Christians and Men, and
" that *every Thing that hath Breath may praise*
" *the Lord.*"

F I N I S.





